



WORKING PAPER 2: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

SOUTHWEST VALLEY LOCAL TRANSIT SYSTEM STUDY

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I. INTRODUCTION

One of the goals of the Southwest Valley Local Transit System Study (SWVLTSS) is to provide transit service options that suit the specific characteristics of the various market types in the Southwest Valley (SW Valley). To successfully accomplish this goal, the project team will need to identify the various market types and understand the travel needs of each market and which service option/s best suits those needs. This public involvement plan identifies the study participation goals and objectives, lists the stakeholders to be involved and the techniques to be utilized at each stage of the decision making process.

II. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GOALS

According to the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), public involvement is a process which involves the public in a problem solving or decision making process resulting in more effective decisions. Therefore, it is important to understand what decisions need to be made, what information is needed from the public to make those decisions better and when the information needs to be collected in time to influence the decision. The public involvement plan for this study has three primary goals:

- Identifying the local transit needs throughout the SW Valley.
- Determining which needs have the highest priority.
- Providing feedback on proposed alternatives designed to meet local public transportation needs and provide connection to regional transit services.

To achieve, these goals, information from the stakeholders and public will be sought during the following tasks:

- 4a – Assessment of transit needs, problems, goals
- 4b – Evaluation and alternatives development
- 6 – Local transit system plan

Public input gathered during these tasks will be reported to the project team and Project Management Team (PMT).



III. IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS AND PUBLIC

To be effective, a public involvement program must involve a broad range of perspectives and include everyone who may be impacted by the decision or perceives to be impacted. For the SWVLTSS, three tiers of stakeholders have been identified.

Tier 1 – Member Agencies

This tier includes the staff and elected officials from the seven local jurisdictions (Avondale, Goodyear, Buckeye, Litchfield Park, Phoenix, Tolleson, and Maricopa County) and representatives from the regional transit planning and operating agencies. These stakeholders are the decision makers.

Tier 2 – Influencers

Influencers are people and organizations who are influential in their communities and/or may have a role in implementing or supporting the transit plan and include the following.

- Local community and business leaders (Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce, WESTMARC, West Valley Leadership, local board and commission members, etc.)
- Groups representing transit users and special interests (social service agencies, disability and senior groups, Friends of Transit, West Valley Human Service Alliance, Arizona Bridge to Independent Living, Southwest Valley Rail Partnership, etc.)
- Community service organizations (Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, HOAs, etc.)
- Major employers (trip reduction coordinators, area Transportation Management Associations, local economic development groups, etc.)
- School districts (district transportation staff and administration)

Tier 3 – Residents

Residents in the SW Valley would be the users of the services in the transit plan and need to be included to ensure the recommended services will meet their existing and future needs. As taxpayers, non-users will also be impacted by the decisions made during the study. Special emphasis will be given to involving the underrepresented or special need communities such as:

- Youth (local youth commissions, boys and girls clubs, school groups, etc.)
- Title VI populations (low income and minorities)



IV. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OBJECTIVES

The following chart identifies the public involvement objective for each of the public involvement goals, the stakeholders who will be involved, the public involvement technique to be used and a preliminary schedule. The chart also defines the role of each stakeholder group in the decision making process and identifies at which spectrum level the group will be involved as defined by the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.

Each stakeholder group will be involved at the consult, involve or collaborate level as defined below.

- **Consult** – To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
- **Involve** – To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
- **Collaborate** – To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Table 1: Public Involvement Objectives

Task	Objectives	Stakeholders	Spectrum Level	Techniques	Schedule
4a – Assessment of transit needs, problems, goals	To identify the public's current and future transportation needs	Member Agencies	Collaborate	Interviews, Newsletter	Jan-Mar 2012
		Influencers	Consult	Online Survey, Newsletter	Jan 2012
		Residents	Consult	Online Survey, Newsletter	Jan 2012
4b – Evaluation and alternatives development	To brainstorm potential alternatives and priorities	Member Agencies	Collaborate	PMT Meetings, Summit	Mar-May 2012
		Influencers	Involve	Summit	April 2012
6 – Local transit system plan	To obtain feedback on the draft plan	Member Agencies	Collaborate	PMT Meetings, Newsletter	May-Aug 2012
		Influencers	Involve	Briefings, Online comment, Newsletter	Aug 2012
		Residents	Consult	Online comment, Newsletter	Aug 2011



V. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

As indicated in the objectives chart, this plan proposes the use of several different public involvement techniques. Each technique is described below. How the technique will be communicated to the public is included in section six of this plan.

A. Interviews with pertinent stakeholder agency staff

After the project kick-off, the project team will interview pertinent stakeholder agency staff and other entities as suggested by the MAG Project Manager and PMT to assess the full range of issues and opportunities for transit service in the study area, identify key local stakeholders and existing communication channels which can be utilized to disseminate information.

B. Project newsletter #1

A one-page, electronic fact sheet will be prepared (both English/Spanish) to introduce the study and inform residents how they can be involved in the process. The primary focus will be to encourage people to complete the online survey of local transit needs.

C. Online survey of needs

A three-week online survey will be conducted in January-February 2012. The purpose of the survey is to identify local transit needs, identify important activity centers, preferred levels of service, willingness to pay for service, etc. The survey will also include demographic questions to allow for analysis by location, income, vehicle ownership, etc.

The survey will be created using SelectSurvey.net software. Responses will be collected on a secure SQL server and mirrored to a second server for backup. A direct link to the survey can be embedded on pages of member agency websites.

To obtain input from those without computer access, survey takers will go to major destinations to collect input, and hard copy surveys and collections boxes will be placed in municipal buildings.

D. SW Valley Local Transit Summit

The online survey will help identify the different needs in each community, but the goal of this study is to develop a transit plan for the SW Valley. The next step will be to bring



the influencers from each community together with the public to review these local needs, jointly identify the priority needs for the SW Valley, determine which services might best meet the needs and discuss how the services could be funded. This will be accomplished during a 3-hour summit in April 2012.

Outcome –potential strategies for meeting the existing and future local transit needs in the SW Valley.

Agenda – The summit agenda will include the following:

- Overview of the local needs as identified by the online survey and the data collection process.
- Explanation of the different type of transit services identifying which service best meets local needs versus regional needs.
- Small group exercise where participants determine which services they think are most appropriate and where they would provide these services (the exercise will be financially constrained).
- Wrap-up and the next steps.

Attendance - The summit will be designed for member agencies' staff, elected officials and the influencers. The general public will also be invited to attend but is not the primary audience. Goal would be to have 100-200 people in attendance.

Co-Sponsorship – To be able to promote the summit to a broader audience of influencers in the SW Valley, the project team proposes seeking co-sponsorship of the Summit from WESTMARC, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce and West Valley Leadership. As a co-sponsor, the organization(s) would assist in securing free meeting space, announcing the event to their membership, underwriting cost of food and beverage, and assisting with the promotion of the event.

Why summit not public meeting – Two primary reasons support a summit instead of a public meeting. One, typically the general public does not turn out for long range planning events. Without a secure funding source and near term plans for the new services, most residents won't take the time to participate. As seen with the Avondale circulator study they are more likely to participate in an online survey (579) than attend a public meeting (3). The public will be invited to participate if desired. Table 1 outlines other opportunities for the public to be involved and provide input during the SWVLTSS.



Second, to be successful, the final plan needs local support for potential future initiatives. This support will come from the influencers. Most community and business leaders won't attend public meetings in the evenings but will attend special events during the business day.

E. Project newsletter #2

A two-page, electronic and printed (1,000 copies) fact sheet will be prepared (both English/Spanish) to provide an overview of the local needs assessment, summit outcomes and describe the key elements of the draft plan. Readers will be directed how to provide feedback on the draft plan.

F. Draft plan online feedback

An online comment form will be prepared and made available to the public for providing feedback on the draft plan.

G. SWVLTSS Final plan summary

A final plan summary highlighting the key elements will be prepared and 50 copies printed for distribution.

H. Public involvement report

A final report detailing all of the outreach activities and input received will be prepared.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

The project team plans to utilize existing communication channels available through member agencies instead of creating a new project website, social media and other communication tools. Spanish translation and interpreters will be provided as needed.

A. Agency websites

Newsletter/fact sheet copy, survey links, summit announcements and periodic project updates will be given to local agencies for posting on their websites.



B. Email blasts

Text and attachments for emails to residents will be prepared and forwarded to local agencies and community organizations to be forwarded to their email distribution lists and list serves. The project team will work with the jurisdictions to include the information in any elected official community emails.

C. Publications

Text will also be provided to the jurisdictions with printed and/or electronic publications.

D. Press release

A press release will be drafted by the project team at the beginning of the project to announce the online survey, prior to the summit and upon release of the draft plan. The release will be provided to member agencies for distribution.

E. Community events

Participate in local community events as appropriate to reach as diverse a population as possible